



**Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs**  
**Testimony on: SB818 - Environment – Permit Applications – Environmental Justice Screening**  
**Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition**  
**Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair**  
**Position: Favorable**  
**Hearing Date: February 24, 2022**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB818. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB818.

SB818 will require a person applying for an environmental permit to include the “EJ Score” from the “Maryland EJScreen” mapping tool for the location where the permit is being sought, and will require the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to conduct an EJ analysis, in accordance with regulations adopted under the bill. MDE must conduct the analysis before making a decision on permit.

The bill defines “environmental justice” as equal protection from environmental and public health hazards for all people regardless of race, income, culture, and social status. The “EJ score” means an overall evaluation of an area’s environment and existing EJ indicators, including: (1) pollution burden exposure; (2) pollution burden environmental effects; (3) sensitive populations; and (4) socioeconomic factors.

For too long, communities of color have aspired to live in healthy, clean neighborhoods, and yet have seen state and local government allow polluting facilities to be concentrated near their homes. This longstanding practice has led to overburdened communities living with disproportionate levels of pollution and the attendant health effects. By making this EJ information part of the permit review process, it will shine a bright light on the environmental injustices concentrated in certain communities and hopefully affect future permit decisions.

SB818 will help Maryland be more transparent regarding the location of permitted activities and their relative impact on environmental justice communities. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.